

[633 cont.]

[Note on foreign text p. 635 cont.]

Tib. dbañ = force, bskur = to consecrate, to transfer. This is a ceremony of the transference of force, at which each lama receives a secret name (Unkrig).

To admit to lama standing with prayer: gēsniēn dzēwla-.

[785] To observe a day of meditation: pi-chai (Chin.); goñson (Tib. loanword) (6) [see Note 6 above].

Member of the Yellow Church: gēlōñba (Tib. loanword) (6) [see Note 6 above].

Pages 634-635 contain the notes given above as numbered footnotes.]

[635]

5. Customs concerning the Dead and Cremation*

* See "Notes," pp. 650-658 [of the foreign text]. [In the translation these notes are given as numbered footnotes following the designations for them in the text.]

Report

763 If someone is close to death, his clothes are taken off,
764 if he is wearing any on the kang. He is washed, shaved, or in the case of a woman the hair is dressed, and tied in a crouching position immediately after the last breath. A piece of cloth is thrown over the shoulder, which is the sole garment of the dead.

764 Then he is put in a death-box, which looks like a portable house, and propped up with straw. The box is placed on the floor in a room, and the closest relatives hold a death-watch there. At each meal the people bring some of the food in front of the death-box, burn paper, and kowtow. Each

[635 cont.]

764 evening the neighbors and friends gather and pray for the dead, squatting in a circle. Some days before the cremation, the master of ceremonies invites a lama to conduct the death ceremonies and burn the corpse. First, however, the mother's brother must release the corpse; this is done the evening before at the meal, when he demands an accounting for the dead person and his interment.

The cremation is undertaken outside the village in a crematory, which on each occasion is built at a different place.

[792] The lama performs almost the same ceremonies on this occasion as at the fire-pouring. After the cremation the remaining bones are kept in a wooden chest and temporarily buried on the spot.

[765] Not until the next spring do the relatives transfer them to the family cemetery. -- Small children are not buried. Adult girls are burned quietly without ceremonies in an isolated place.

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765 The strict period of mourning lasts 49 days. As a sign of mourning, the men turn their clothing inside out, and the women remove their ornaments and certain parts of their headdress.

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Details

● 763 Preparation of the corpse: Shortly before death, the men
764 shave first the head and then the beard of the dying person. If death sets in too suddenly, however, so that they can no longer shave him alive, it is left undone. After the shaving, he is undressed and his hands, face, and feet are washed, not the entire body. The men do this for men, the women for women. The women keep their long hair, as do girls. The hair is parted in the center and two three-stranded braids are plaited, which hang down over the breast or the back. In the case of sudden death, the corpse is merely washed and the hair dressed; the washing is then done with only a damp cloth (1).

[823]

1. [Foreign text p. 650.] Why no water may flow over the corpse could not be discovered; probably it is feared that the water would thereby be made impure; it is counted among the basic elements.

[636 cont.]

775 Before the dying person draws his last breath, someone puts
● 763 a mani-ball, a piece of gold, a piece of silver, and a piece of
778 butter in his mouth. The mani-ball guarantees him an advanced
[262] age after the later rebirth (2). Gold and silver testify at the
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2. [Foreign text pp. 650-651.]

According to the informant, in the case of the mani-ball, mani-ruru, the pill that the Chinese call chen-ling wan, that is, the soul-shaking pill, is involved. According to Taoistic reports in the shen-hsien t'ung-chien, spirit-mirror, this pill is made from the sap of the legendary fan-hun-shu, that is, the soul-restoring tree. This tree grows on the coast of the western ocean. It is of black wood. If one strikes it, it sounds like the growling of a bull. Its root is brewed into a thick brew, and out of this brew the pill is made. The pill has an exceedingly strong scent (the tree can also be smelled miles away). This scent is called fan-hun hsiang, that is, soul-restoring scent. If after someone dies he is touched with this pill within three days or it is burned before him so that the smoke passes over him, or if the pill is put in his mouth, then he comes to life again. Under the Han emperors this kind of incense was supplied as tribute from the Yüeh-chih and supposedly brought dead persons to life in the palace. This pill also plays an important role in the medicine of the lamas. It is the so-called pill of immortality. The Tujen buy this pill in the monasteries. Its color is red. According to their

775 [636 cont.]

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[Note on foreign text pp.650-651].
conceptions, to be sure, it cannot
ensoul the dead corpse again, but
it nonetheless brings the dead to life
in another rebirth. -- W. Filchner
(Unkrig), Kumbum, also mentions
this pill on p. 400 under the name
rilu, and in Note 1683 under the
Tibetan way of writing it, ril bu.
It is clear that the Tujen pronuncia-
tion reru (ruru) is merely a corruption
of the Tibetan word. Ch. Das has
two ways of writing it, ril po and ril
bu (with the l silent); he translates
both as "ball, globule," [cited in
English], and for ril bu he also adds
"pill" [cited in English], [651] with-
out any further designations for them
(pp. 1184-85). This ruru is to be dis-
tinguished from nuru, the Tib. nor bu or
cintāmaṇi, the Buddhistic wishing-
jewel. -- According to the conception
of the lamas and of the people, the ruru
pill reproduces itself; cf. the chapter,
"Earth-god Urn." Sometimes one
meets lamas who firmly believe that
Europeans, too, have this wonder pill
of long life, which is why they live
much longer than the Chinese and the
Tibetans; they claim to know that
there are people in Europe who are
several hundred years old.

[648]

rebirth that he comes from a wealthy position and will again
acquire gold and silver. Butter is the most superior daily food
[262] and is supposed to be that again in the later life.

[640 cont.]

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[Note on foreign text p. 654 cont.]
hsiao-tzu in Chinese, who are the male descendants and relatives of the first and second degree, for example, younger brothers, younger cousins, grandsons.

on the mother's side do not appear in the house of mourning until the eve of the cremation.

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They must be informed, however, immediately after the death; this is called "death announcement." The master of ceremonies, with a small bottle of liquor, goes to the mother's brother to announce the death of the latter's nephew or niece (14).

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14.[Foreign text p. 654.] In recent times the Tujen announce the death to the mother's brother by means of a written communication, like the Chinese. The original practice, however, is the announcement with the liquor-jug, to which is tied a flock of wool.

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The two now consult as to how the funeral solemnities are to be arranged, how many monks are to be invited to pray, how large the fees are to be, etc. The mother's brother is intent upon setting demands as high as possible, whereas the master of ceremonies sets lower ones. Once they have agreed upon

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the approximate level, they drink the little jug of liquor together. If they do not agree, the master of ceremonies returns home with the liquor and he receives new instructions from the bereaved family. Sometimes this happens two or three times. A final arrangement is not made until the last day at the accounting in the house of mourning.

On the eve of the cremation, the mother's brother, and with him all the male relatives on the mother's side, appears in the yard of the bereaved. The women among the maternal

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[Note on foreign text pp. 655-656 cont.]
of the souls of the dead, who evidently are regarded as living corpses. This point is decisive in explaining the meaning. It is a matter of the peace and good fortune of the family, which are endangered by a restless soul if it is not satisfied and continues to wander about. This satisfaction is brought about by providing a decent interment (clothing, coffin) and the prayer of the lama. Then "the way is open" for the soul, as the Buddhists say; the significance of the above-mentioned proverb of the Chinese is shown here. How strongly this conception still affects even the Chinese is shown by the recast saying, wai-chia pu k'ai yen, wang-jen pu shang t'ien, that is, if the mother's family does not begin to speak, the dead will not ascend to heaven. -- With all this, however, it becomes clear how strong the rights of the mother's family are, and its concern for its members even beyond death.

If there is no actual mother's brother, then the one nearest to the mother's brother takes his place; this is the one who follows the mother's brother in the inheritance.

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• [763] Time of cremation: As soon as the dead person draws his last breath, a relative goes to the soothsayer or Bon priest and has the day of cremation determined by the spirits. He does not enter the compound of the soothsayer, however, but announces himself in front of the large gate of the yard, because since he comes from the house of a dead person, he may not appear before the gods. Aside from the spirit-spear, spirit-table, spirit-litter, and the Bon priest, one may also ask a Chinese lay bonze. Lamas and Taoist bonzes never determine the time. Only the day is given, not the hour. As

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thereupon swallowed opium and also died. Because ⁷⁶⁴ this case had involved the village and caused a lot of trouble, the chief of the village, with the maternal uncles, ^[766] decided that they were unworthy to be cremated and buried them in the same pit. In Part I, other similar cases have been recorded.

The old Turco-Mongols buried their dead; ^[77] the old Hsiung-nu buried their dead also, as did the Hsien-pi.²⁷ The Ch'itan did not bury the corpses, but placed them in trees for three years, and then removed the bones and buried them.²⁸ This custom is widely distributed in northern Eurasia from the Tungus to the Lapps.

Monguors follow the Chinese custom in disposing of children who have died during the first month of age. They burn them and bury them in the k'ang, for it is said to be harmful to bring such corpses out of the room. Children of less than ten years of age are enveloped in straw and thrown in a lonely spot and disposed of by dogs and rapacious animals. Children who die under fifteen years of age are usually cremated without any ceremony, and their bones are not cared for. Young people under twenty years of age, dying in the morning, are cremated at evening; those who die at night are cremated in the early morning. Unmarried youngsters are cremated without any ceremony, and prayers are not said for them; their bones are collected after the cremation and buried in the abode of the wicked people. In the Ordos these dead are supposed to become vampires and to cause many deaths.²⁹

In the case of married people dying without children, ^[766] the maternal uncle is invited, a lama says some prayers, the harmful souls are driven out of the home, and cremation is without ceremony. Their bones are buried in the same terrible abode. However, in case both are aged, prayers are said for several days. After cremation the bones are collected and buried in the family cemetery, at the request of the maternal uncle. According to the Monguors, the aged dead are no longer abandoned in valleys, on account of the density of the population, and the custom of cutting the dead into pieces to feed the vultures has never been practised.

DEATH

When a Monguor is dying, the women of the family, ⁷⁶³ from the roof of the house, call on his spirit not to abandon them, crying that they are preparing for it a delicious dish, apologizing for their shortcomings, and with tears and sighs giving assurance of their love, in a most pathetic way. If a child is dying, women on the roof cry and call his name, wave his best clothes and pretend that cookies and candies are waiting for him. This is an age-old custom practiced in China from the

²⁶ W. Radloff, *Aus Sibirien* 2: 120-126. Parker, *A thousand years of the Tartars*, 86.

²⁷ Grousset, *op. cit.*, 15-86, 104.

²⁸ Wittfogel and Feng, *op. cit.*, 204.

²⁹ Van Oost, *op. cit.*, 126.

[p. 143(A)]

earliest times.³⁰ If the sick man has a painful agony, 763 ●
 lamas are invited to pray for a fast departure or revival, according to the fate fixed for him; they beat drums and ring bells, around the sick man, making a terrible noise, and finally they help him to confide in Buddha. After the last breath has been drawn, they pull some hair out of the top of the head in order that his souls may escape through the bregmatic fontanelle. When death is approaching, his face and hands are washed, and he is shaved. Some Monguors undress him completely; others put his best clothes on him. It is said that in former times all the dying were undressed. In China it is a capital sin for a son to let his parents die without having dressed them in their best clothes. The Mongols, however, not only undress the dying person but bring him into the courtyard, for nobody is allowed to die in the home.³¹

Immediately after death, all the jewels are removed, 764
 the hair unplaited, and some butter and tea leaves put into the mouth. Some Monguors add a "pill of immortality," bought in the Chinese pharmacies or in the lamaseries; some are fond of adding a precious stone or a piece of silver, as the Chinese used to do. The knees of the dead are drawn up under the chin, the hands placed on the chest and bound with a hemp rope, and a piece of white cloth is placed on the shoulders. Often the corpse is put into a sack of white cloth, and a gown and a scarf put upon it. Much has been written concerning the position of the dead, and many contradictory explanations offered by lamas, shamans, and laymen. A piece of yellow cloth is put on the shoulders of those who had become lay-monks or lay-nuns and burned with them. At that time most of the Monguors, old and young, who during their lifetime had not performed the rite to become a lay-monk, invite a lama who pours water on a mirror in which is reflected the face of the deceased, thus making him a lay monk.

The toilet is made by members of the deceased's own generation, except that sons care for their parents. During the laying out of the dead, the women start the lamentations on the roof, in the courtyard, or at the gate, so that the whole village knows of the death. A coffin is made by the carpenter, large enough to contain the corpse in a squatting position; it will be more or less elaborately decorated, according to the wealth of the family and the line of generation of the deceased. In the coffin is also placed a dough roll, according to the Chinese custom, for which contradictory Taoist explanations are given. A small coffin is prepared for the bones collected after the cremation. The corpse is put in the coffin as soon as it is ready, before which is placed a small table with twelve rolls and a lamp. Paper is burned, and at every meal a cup, with the same meal prepared for the family, is put before the deceased. Sons and relatives relieve each other day and night to keep watch, in order that rats and cats may not spoil the

³⁰ Couvreur, *Li-hi*, 1: 85-181, Ho-Kien-fu, 1927.

³¹ Schröder, *op. cit.*, 635. Van Oost, *op. cit.*, 126.